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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 002322

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/25/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [PINR](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)  
SUBJECT: SOMALI TFG PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER AGREE ON  
WAY FORWARD, FOR NOW

REF: ADDIS ABABA 2265

Classified By: CDA Deborah Malac. Reason: 1.4 (B).

11. (C/NF) Summary. Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) President Abdullahi Yusuf and Prime Minister Hassan Hussein Nur "Adde" are expected to sign an agreement in Addis Ababa on August 26 confirming their willingness to work with each other, bridging, at least for now, their recent impasse over the Prime Minister's attempt to fire Mogadishu Mayor Mohammed Dheere. MFA Acting Chief of the Minister's Cabinet Abdetta Dribssa told PolOff in a meeting on August 23 that the agreement was a face-saving compromise for both the President and Prime Minister. The meeting was also attended by Minelik Alemu, MFA Acting Director General for the International Law and Consular Affairs, and Tesfaye Yilma, MFA Director General for Europe and the Americas. The agreement calls for the election of a new Benadir administration 15 days from the agreement's approval, with the understanding of both leaders that Mohammed Dheere will not be elected. The agreement also increases the size of the cabinet from 15 to 20 members, to include the five ministers who resigned and the five ministers the Prime Minister appointed to replace those who resigned. Abdetta admitted that neither leader was truly committed to reconciliation, and Minelik questioned how long the agreement would last. Abdetta stated that Mohammed Dheere remained a threat to the Prime Minister out of revenge for the Prime Minister's attempt to fire Dheere. Lastly, Post expects that the Ethiopian government will increase its calls for greater USG bilateral coordination and increased support for the TFG. End Summary.

Parties Ready to Sign Agreement...

12. (C/NF) On August 26, President Yusuf and Prime Minister Nur Adde are expected to sign an agreement in Addis Ababa that declares their commitment to working with each other within the TFG government. According to Abdetta, the agreement was meant as a face-saving device to both TFG leaders and was a compromise to get them beyond their current impasse in an attempt to save the TFG. The heart of the agreement, which will need to be approved by the parliament, resolves the issue of Mohammed Dheere's firing and the issue of the composition of the cabinet. The agreement calls for a new Benadir administration, to be named through some type of regional conference and election 15 days from the TFG parliament's approval of the agreement, with the understanding that Dheere will not be part of the new government. Abdetta admitted that there was nothing prohibiting Dheere from standing for office in the election,

and, when pressed, said that "if Dheere is elected, we will have to deal with him." The size of the cabinet will be increased from 15 to 20 members. The five ministers who resigned will keep their seats and the five ministers appointed by the Prime Minister to replace those who resigned will also be confirmed into the cabinet. Abdetta said that the composition of the cabinet would continue to reflect the 4.5 formula from the TFG Charter. (Note: There are conflicting reports on the total number of cabinet positions authorized by the agreement, but it is certain that the size of the cabinet will be increased.)

...But Reconciliation "Spirit" Lacking  
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13. (C/NF) Minelik and Tesfaye, who were also being briefed on the agreement for the first-time at our August 23 meeting, were openly skeptical of the willingness of Yusuf and Nur Adde to work together. In an unusually frank moment, Minelik asked Abdetta "did we (Ethiopia) force them into this agreement?" Abdetta denied that the parties had been forced into reconciling, but admitted that "the spirit of reconciliation was lacking." He said that while both leaders had agreed to the basic principles, both the President and Prime Minister were still attempting to manipulate the terms of the agreement to improve their position against the other. Minelik wondered aloud whether the agreement would last a week, and insisted that there must be follow through and some mechanism to hold the parties accountable for their actions. He went on to note that Washington and the international community believed they had time to contemplate what to do on

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Somalia because Ethiopian troops were there, but he emphasized that they did not have such time. He said Ethiopia would leave Somalia because it was the only way to motivate the international community to act.

Dheere a Threat to the Prime Minister  
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14. (C/NF) Regarding the Prime Minister's attempted firing of Mohammed Dheere, Abdetta said that Nur Adde had no choice but to move against Dheere in the manner he did by making the firing public before Yusuf had officially approved the action. He said that had Nur Adde kept quiet while waiting for Yusuf, Dheere would have been alerted to the move by a cabinet member, and reacted by either imprisoning the Prime Minister or by having him killed. Abdetta said that after the announcement Dheere moved his technicals around Mogadishu in a threatening manner, and that Ethiopian intervention was required to warn Dheere off. Abdetta assessed that Dheere remained a threat to the Prime Minister.

Insight into the Somali Worldview?  
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15. (C/NF) Abdetta, who has been working Somali issues for more than a decade and who spent two years in Hargeysa, said that Somalis do not see the individual, rather they see the ethnic group or clan behind the individual, and deal with the individual based on their assessment of the person's group. As an ethnic Oromo, Abdetta said Somalis do not see him, but they see 32 million of his Oromo brethren who, at least in theory, can be called to arms when needed. Therefore, they give him more respect. On the other hand for example, a Gurage Ethiopian Ambassador to Somaliland some years back was never accepted because he was viewed as a man who came from a small, business-oriented people who had no capability for war. By extension, Abdetta added that Somalis viewed AMISOM not as representative of the international community, but as a small isolated force that can be eliminated at any time. Abdetta opined that the local clans in Mogadishu had already divided up AMISOM's assets and, "already knew which clans were going to get which vehicles."

¶6. (C/NF) Minelik agreed, remembering that Ethiopia, in his opinion, had made a serious mistake by sending an Ethiopian ethnic Somali Ambassador to TFG conferences in Mogadishu and Nairobi. He said that the Somalis did not see the Ambassador as Ethiopian, but as one more Somali who was there to represent the interests of his particular clan, rather than the interests of the Ethiopian state.

Somalis, Muggles, and Non Sequiturs  
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¶7. (C/NF) Abdetta was still shocked and not a little amused that President Yusuf, in his August 16 meeting with EmbOffs, had asked whether Prime Minister Nur Adde was black, white, or yellow (Reftel). He said that he had reconfirmed with Somali contacts that Yusuf was really asking whether Nur Adde was a white man cursed by God, and by implication, a traitor to all Somalis. The conversation prompted Tesfaye to note that he had read all of the Harry Potter books primarily to be able to converse with his children who were avid Potter fans, and declared that he understood the definition of a muggle (implied in this context as an outsider). His revelation brought similar confessions from both Abdetta and Minelik who said that they too had read the books to be able to understand what their children were telling them.

Comment  
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¶8. (C/NF) Although Abdetta said that the Ethiopian government did not force Yusuf and Nur Adde into the agreement, it is clear that without considerable Ethiopian pressure the two sides would have never have come to such an agreement. The agreement is, in fact, Ethiopia's envisioned roadmap for sustainment of the TFG throughout the remaining transitional period, and Washington should expect that Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin will continue to press for increased bi-lateral coordination for implementation and follow-up of the roadmap. End Comment.  
MALAC